

Minor Review of the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG)

Scope of Review

In 2025 the ABS is conducting a minor review of the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups ([ASCCEG](#)). ASCCEG was last reviewed in 2019, and the Australian community has changed substantially in this time. Changes to the [Ancestry Standard](#) (how the ancestry question is asked in the Census) was considered as part of the [2026 Census topic review](#) and will not be considered further in this process.

The outcome of this review, in the form of an updated classification, will be published in November 2025 and used in the 2026 Census. The time frame is very short for a classification review. This time constraint means the scope of the review is limited, as outlined below.

The ABS invites you to provide feedback on the scope of this review. It is anticipated that ASCCEG will be reviewed again in the future, following the 2026 Census. Any issues or feedback identified in this process, but not investigated, will be considered in a future review.

In-scope

1. Investigation into the addition of new Cultural and Ethnic groups (4-digit level)

The ABS has received feedback regarding groups not currently identified in the ASCCEG at the 4-digit level. In consultation with stakeholders, the review will investigate whether these new groups (4-digit level) should be added to the classification.

This proposed investigation includes the revision of residual 'not elsewhere classified' (nec) categories. Cultural and ethnic groups that are not separately identified in the classification are captured in nec categories.

2. Appropriate representation of existing Cultural and Ethnic groups

In consultation with stakeholders, the review will investigate existing Cultural and Ethnic group titles. This will ensure all language used is appropriate and reflects contemporary terminology.

3. Investigation into retiring declining Cultural and Ethnic groups (4-digit level)

Cultural and Ethnic groups that have been in decline (less than 100 responses captured in each Census, between 2011-2021), will be investigated and may be retired to the most appropriate nec category.

Out of scope

1. Investigation into the associated Ancestry Standard

The ASCCEG is designed to be used in the collection, aggregation and dissemination of statistical and administrative data related to ethnic and cultural identity, as well as ancestry, of the Australian population.

In 2024 the ABS reviewed the [Ancestry Standard](#) as part of the [2026 Census topic review](#). For Ancestry, the outcome of this review is that the number of ancestries that individuals can report in the Census will increase to four in the 2026 Census. The final questions for the 2026 census are currently scheduled to be published on the ABS website in late 2025.

2. Changes to the underpinning conceptual content and classification criteria

The current concept underpinning the ASCCEG is “ethnicity”. For the purposes of ASCCEG, “ethnicity” refers to the shared identity or similarity of a group of people based on one or more distinguishing characteristics such as geographic proximity, and similar social and cultural characteristics.

In the ABS the method of collecting ethnicity or ancestry statistics is through a self-assessed response to a direct question with no attempts to historically determine the origins of individuals.

The ABS has no plans to change the underlying concept of the ASCCEG and the methodology used to build the classification.

3. Investigation of, or changes to, other related classifications

There are several classifications closely related to the ASCCEG: the Australian Standard Classification of Languages ([ASCL](#)), the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups ([ASCRG](#)) and the Standard Australian Classification of Countries ([SACC](#)). During the review of ASCCEG, issues may be identified that also affect these three other classifications. Where this occurs, the identified issues will be documented for consideration in future reviews of these related classifications.

The ABS recently undertook reviews of two related classifications, ASCL and ASCRG. Further details on the newest versions are available on the ABS website.

Further information

For further information about the classification and the standard, please visit the links below:

- [Ancestry Standard, 2014, Version 2.1 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- [Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups \(ASCCEG\), 2019 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- The full classification is available in the “*Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCEEG), 2019*” webpage (linked above) under the section Data downloads. It is also accessible here (see Table 1.3 in attached file):



For enquiries related to ASCCEG, please email the ABS at:
standards@abs.gov.au.